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PTQ4992

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D), B6

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00	ANHR-00
	SRPP-00	EB-00	EUR-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	AC-01	NRRC-00	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	USIE-00	ECA-00	PMB-00	PRM-00	DRL-01	G-00
	SAS-00	/006W					

-----5FFBBF 052120Z /38

P 051929Z MAY 03
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1011
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY VATICAN CITY
DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

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NSC FOR LLORENS

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GUATEMALA FOR DCM MCFARLAND
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD
DEPT LABOR FOR ILAB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/05/2013
TAGS: PHUM, ELAB, VE
SUBJECT: VENEZUELA POLITICAL UPDATE, MAY 5, 2002

CLASSIFIED BY: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ABELARDO A. ARIAS. REASONS 1.5(B) A
ND (D).

SUMMARY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
DATE/CASE ID: 24 OCT 2005 200304736

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] AN OPPOSITION MARCHER WAS KILLED DURING THE VENEZUELAN WORKERS CONFEDERATION (CTV) ANNUAL MAY DAY MARCH; FIVE OTHER MARCHERS WERE INJURED IN SCUFFLES OR BY GUNFIRE. THE GOV CONDEMNED THE VIOLENCE WHILE OPPOSITION POLITICIANS ACCUSED THE GOV OF HAVING INSTIGATED IT. LEADERS OF A RIVAL NEW FEDERATION, THE NATIONAL UNION OF VENEZUELAN WORKERS (UNT), CLAIMED THEIR SEPARATE MARCH WAS SUCCESSFUL, BUT LAMENTED THAT THE PRESENCE OF SENIOR GOV OFFICIALS IN THE RANKS WRONGLY SUGGESTED A UNT-GOV RELATIONSHIP. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE PAPAL NUNCIO AND VENEZUELAN BISHOPS ISSUED REMARKS CRITICAL OF THE GOV WHICH DREW PARALLELS BETWEEN THE RECENT CRACKDOWN ON DISSIDENTS IN CUBA AND THE SITUATION IN VENEZUELA. END
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SUMMARY.

B1

OPPOSITION MARCHER KILLED DURING ANNUAL LABOR MARCHES

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3. (SBU) BOTH THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION STAGED LABOR MARCHES MAY 1, BUT THE OPPOSITION'S ENDED TRAGICALLY WHEN AN ALLEGED PRO-CHAVEZ GUNMAN SHOT AND KILLED A CONFEDERATION OF VENEZUELAN WORKERS (CTV) MEMBER. THE VIOLENCE OCCURRED AT PLAZA O'LEARY, THE TRADITIONAL TERMINUS OF MAY DAY MARCHES. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, FIVE OTHER MARCHERS WERE HURT BY GUNSHOTS OR SCUFFLES. SOME OPPOSITION POLITICIANS CLAIMED THE GOVERNMENT INSTIGATED THE VIOLENCE AND THAT THE DISIP (POLITICAL POLICE) PROTECTED THE GUNMEN. CARACAS MAYOR ALFREDO PENA SAID NINE SUSPECTS ARE IN POLICE CUSTODY. PRO-GOVERNMENT POLITICIANS CONDEMNED THE VIOLENCE.

4. (SBU) THE PRO-GOVERNMENT MARCH WAS A COMING-OUT PARTY FOR THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED NATIONAL UNION OF VENEZUELAN WORKERS (UNT), WHICH ASPIRES TO RIVAL THE CTV. SEVERAL SPEAKERS USED THE OCCASION TO BOAST ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM AND MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES, AND TO PROMISE THAT CTV PRESIDENT CARLOS ORTEGA, ENJOYING POLITICAL ASYLUM IN COSTA RICA, WOULD BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

[REDACTED] ON MAY 2 THAT THE UNT HAD NOT INVITED VICE PRESIDENT RANGEL, MVR DEPUTY TAREK SAAB

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AND OTHER GOV OFFICIALS WHO TURNED UP AT THE UNT MARCH.
THEIR PRESENCE, ☐ SAID, "CONTAMINATED" AN OTHERWISE
SUCCESSFUL EVENT.

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NUNCIO, BISHOPS CONCERNED BY PARALLELS WITH CUBA

8. (SBU) IN HIS OPENING REMARKS TO A MEETING OF THE
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VENEZUELAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE (CEV) ON APRIL 28,
ARCHBISHOP ANDRE DUPUY, THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIO, REFERRED TO THE
ONGOING ABUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY CASTRO'S DICTATORSHIP IN
CUBA. HE QUOTED THE TITLE OF THE PASTORAL LETTER BY THE
ARCHBISHOP OF HAVANA, JAIME CARDINAL ORTEGA, COMMEMORATING
THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF FELIX VARELA, "THERE IS
NO FATHERLAND WITHOUT VIRTUE," AND DREW A CLEAR PARALLEL
BETWEEN CUBANS' CONCERNS ABOUT THEIR SITUATION WITH
VENEZUELAN'S UNEASE ABOUT THEIR OWN. SOME IN THE OPPOSITION
INTERPRETED THE NUNCIO'S STATEMENT AS A STRONG EXPRESSION OF
PAPAL CONCERN ABOUT VENEZUELA'S POLITICAL DIRECTION. IN
THEIR CLOSING STATEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE, VENEZUELAN
BISHOPS STRONGLY BACKED A RECALL REFERENDUM AS THE ONLY WAY
TO PREVENT A "TRUE NATIONAL COLLAPSE." THEY ALSO CALLED FOR
"RESPECT FOR THE RULES OF THE GAME, A CLEAR AND PRECISE TIME
LINE, AND PROVIDE THE NECESSARY FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND
LOGISTICS, AND TRANSPARENCY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS." THE

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BISHOPS CALLED FOR THE DESIGNATION OF AN "IMPARTIAL AND
EFFICIENT CNE" AND RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT THE CHAVEZ
ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC IDEALS.
SHAPIRO

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